THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE SEATTLE AREA TIMEX/SINCLAIR USERS

SWYM

GROUP

MARCH 1990

VOLUME 5
NUMBER 3

President:Derryck Turner
V.P. :Gerry Desmaris
Secretary:Malcolm Post
Treasurer:Dave Battershill
Librarian:Dale Fritz
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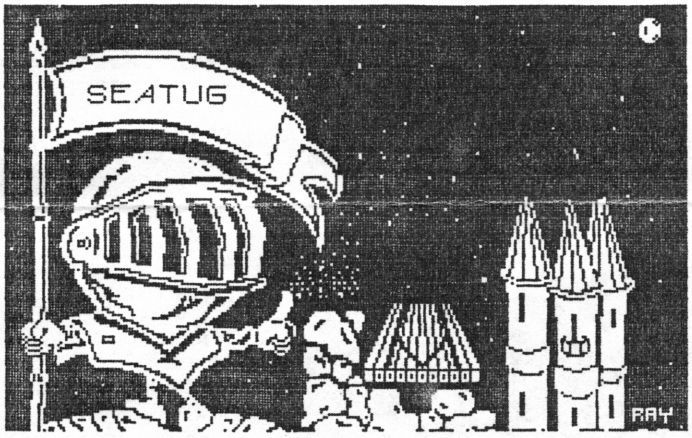
:Chuck Kereluck



MARCH MEETING:
MARCH 1st, 1990
THURSDAY 7:30pm

8517 35th Ave. NE. Seattle
UNIVERSITY FEDERAL SAVINGS BANK

SEATUG General Info Address:
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Seattle, Wa. 98117-3044
(206)789-3275

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SEATUG supports ZX/80, T/S 1000, T/S 1500, T/S 2068 and QL computers.

March meeting overview:

Derryck Turners' demo of the Oliger Disk Drive interface.

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Possible demo of another video digitizer board for the 2068 by Mike DiRienzo author of PIX-FX. PIX-FX is an outstanding graphics program for the 2068. Hopefully PIX-FX will be also be demonstrated. WELCOME MIKE!!!!!!

This months contents:

1) Random Bits
By: Chuck Kerekuck

2) Minutes/NO MINUTES THIS ISSUE.
If you were there you now know what happened!

3) SNUG Roundup
Synopsis by:Chuck

4) Software Review
MSCRIPT V5.5
By: Donald Lambert

5) Hardware Review:
Panasonic KX-P1124 Printer
By: Chuck Kereluck

6)QL Software Review:
FRONT PAGE desktop publishing program
By: Robert Cazares

7)PIX-FX Review:
2068 Graphics program
By: Robert Cazares

8)NEWSLETTER NEWS:
SEATUGS' newsletter exchange
By: Robert Cazares

YES, it is another SINCLAIR USER game screen! From January 1990

REPRINTED FROM SEATTLE TIMES, 1989

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A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TODAY
By Keith Robinson

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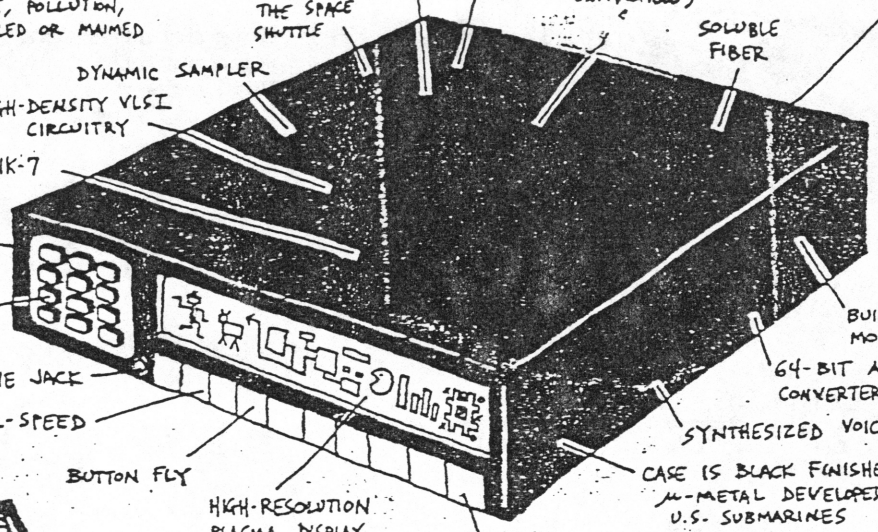

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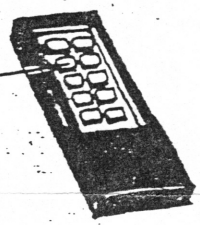

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NKR 11/26

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Richard James

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638 Island & Peninsula Rentals

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648 Rooms for Rent

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CAPITOL HILL
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Renton - M/F, share 2 bdrm apt, $242 + ½ util. Sandra 277-0941.

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TECHNICAL TALK-NOTES-DIAGRAMS-DATA-SUGGESTIONS-INFORMATION...

Random Bits

TECHNICAL TALK-NOTES-DIAGRAMS-DATA-SUGGESTIONS-INFORMATION...

by Chuck Kerelick

IT'S SHOPPING TIME!

Please notice a new, hopefully regular feature in your edition of SWYM, this month: the ads. That's right. We're starting to receive commercial advertisements in our newsletter! This is just a start and we hope to have more, soon. What do we need with ads? Well, an advertisement by a T/S software/hardware vendor, (Which, you know, is on the endangered-but-much-needed species list) will immediately let you know of the latest wonders that are now available (And there are some beauts!). Another practical purpose is that they allow the possibility of a situation where we don't feel squeamish about maybe having to put TWO stamps on that envelope to mail your newsletter!

Remember back in the good ol' days, when there were so many hardware and software commercial developers, that it was overwhelming? And what did we do? We ignored them. And they went away.

So here we are, left with a small handful of vendors, who are still crazy enough about their Timex/Sinclair machines to keep plugging away, continuing to offer us products,whose quality and innovation keep getting better, all the time. And what are we going to do, this time around? Support 'em, right??

Think of the ads as looking into a store window. And let's go shopping!

WANTED: THE GREMLIN'S HEAD!

For those of you who haven't been there, there's been a rash of strange occurrences, for at least the past three consecutive SEATUG meetings. These odd happenings surface during potentially amazing demos. What's strange is that every one has ended in a dismal failure!

First there was the TS1000 Morse Code Encoder/Decoder. Then it was NX1000/Pixel Print demo. After that came the video-digitizing demo. Sure winners, right? Guaranteed to make you hang your mouth open in awe? All flops.

There's a nasty gremlin loose at SEATUG, and we want his head! Now, the only way to seriously damage this cretin is for some brave soul to pull off an honest to goodness, successful demo.

Let's get the monkey off our backs! Death to the Gremlin!

The gauntlet has been laid. Who will take up the challenge?

COMPUTER HELP

Got a particularly nagging software problem? Don't know where to find that special CMOS chip for that '1000' mod? Write to COMPUTER HELP! Do this and we'll publish your problem for all to see. This way, if someone else can give assistance, they can write back to the person with the problem. So whatever is ailing you,computer-wise write to COMPUTER HELP,9013 32nd Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98115.

Speedy replies not guaranteed.

GIANT AUGUST ISSUE PLANNED

August, 1990 marks the 1-year anniversary of publishing SWYM in its current Pixel Print format. Big deal, you say? You bet! Some interesting things have been happening since this mark in time: We've had articles republished in others newsletters, including Canada. Most opinions expressed toward our new format have been emphatically encouraging. We're actually selling ads and subscriptions.

So, in an effort to celebrate this turn of events, we would like to publish a giant (relatively) issue for August! There is, however, one catch: You have to help. ,Have you gotten a new piece of equipment, lately? Tell us about it! Have you written an interesting program, to solve some particular problem? Tell us about it! Maybe you have other hobbies, and have devised ways to incorporate computer hacking into it. Tell us about it! Whatever it is, we want to know.

You see, this "Giant August Issue" is just not going to happen without you. Give it some thought. Please?

ANNIVERSARY = STAN LEMKE

Speaking of "anniversaries", this particular up-coming one would not even be possible without Mr. Stan Lemke and his valuable associates. He's continuing his 2068 development, with some snazzy offshoots of his famous DTP systems,which are still being improved. How about fancy return-address labels? And more! He really would like to hear from you! Write to him at 2144 White Oak, Wichita, KS 67207.

SWYM

REVIEWS

SNUG ROUNDUP

SNUG'S 1ST NEWSLETTER

After a long, agonizing wait, the controversial Sinclair National Users Group has finally released the first issue of their much-expected publication.

This first effort is both interesting and a bit disappointing.

Dated February, 1990, SNUG ROUND UP runs 10 pages of pure text. Not bad for just starting out! SWYM only had five, including the cover, when it first got going with its current format. There is no formal cover, here. It just dives right in.

And this is what it dives into:

After apologizing for taking so darn long, it informs its membership that such membership has has been extended through 1990 at no extra charge. Thanks, SNUG. Any other way would have been self-destructive.

SNUG ROUND-UP, like SWYM and most other newsletters, seriously need the written contributive support of its audience. To further that goal, the editorial board at 'SRU' has published a set of guidlines for prospective writers. One guideline that is definitely curious, is the one that says that if any art material is sent in, have it in camera-ready form. Why? What's wrong with, say, 2068 SCREEN$ files? You've seen the many results from that method, right here in SWYM. Doesn't look bad, right? Now if the debut issue of ROUND-UP had been a regular glossy magazine, then the camera ready request would have been a natural. It does seem odd for this particular format. Especially in this day and age of widespread computer-generated artwork. An original file will 'come out' better than a picture of it. You ought to see SWYM, before it hits the xerox!

Speaking of, 'if ROUND-UP had been a magazine', it's mentioned that there is still an offer to take over an existing publication. So if that happens, start collecting that camera-ready art work!

Other articles included a multi page piece on the use of PRINT#, LPRINT#, OPEN# and CLOSE# commands for the 2068. In addition, a news page was included, announcing, among other things, a 1990 SINCLAIR/TIMEX FEST to be held in Wakesha, Wisconsin, on June 1-3 at a Holiday Inn. Write P.O. Box 101, Butler, WI 53007.

One of the more fascinating articles in this issue, is the "wish list". This is a list of possible future projects of SNUG. Keep in mind, that "SNUG" does not necessarily mean just the 'head office' or the folks who published the newsletter, but the whole national membership. In other words, if anyone out there can think of a way to do any of the following, and then do it, jump right in!

1.) Universal Disk Reading. Any machine-to-any machine disk file transfer.
2.) Cross Compilers. Convert any code from any machine to run on any other machine.
3.) Diagnostic Software.
4.) Help Files for everything.
5.) General Editor for any file.
6.) Sequential Files
7.) GIF Decoder for the 2068
8.) SCSI for the QL to interface with ANY mass-storage device
9.) Extensive documentation and cross-referencing of everything Sinclair-related, plus the library to handle it all

These are just some of the ideas listed. It's an ambitious goal; something that cannot be accomplished without the efforts of the whole membership.

And that seems to be the point of the whole debut issue of this newsletter. SNUG is you; you are SNUG. The elected officers are just the managers. They're delegating authority to the rest of us. Without the efforts of all individual clubs, SNUG will die. Then, we will truly be on our own.

It's taken a long time for this national organization to come out of hiding and say, "Yes Virginia, there really is a SNUG", and while the first publication of ROUND-UP leaves a lot to be desired, appearance-wise, we do welcome the beginning of what could be a very productive Timex Sinclair future.

SOFTWARE REVIEW

by Donald Lambert

MSCRIPT V5.5

Reprinted from CRAGIST NEWSLETTER #5 1989

I recently received MSCRIPT V5.5 from Jack Dohany as an upgrade from V5.0 cassette version which I had sort of converted to LKDOS. But my version was either all LKDOS or all cassette;or, you could have a cassette LOAD and a LKDOS SAVE or a LKDOS LOAD and a cassette SAVE. There was just no way to change the disk drive from within the program.

The first big difference you will notice with V5.5 is that the repeat is much faster. I started to use MSCRIPT V5.5 before reading the manual and it was amazing to see the cursor zip across the screen the first time.

One of the other differences is the change of menu (which is now Home Menu) and the addition of a few commands, such as USE, which allows you to change from cassette to disk and then to choose which disk drive, 0-4. GIVE NAME will name the text in advance, so that when you SAVE, the file name will be displayed, and if you hit the 'Y' key, the SAVE routine starts. If you want to change the file name, hit ENTER or 'N' and then you can reenter the file name for that SAVE. KILL will kill the file name along with the text. BACKUP will SAVE a copy of MSCRIPT to whatever disk drive that shows on Home Menu.

There is one feature that is very nice to use, if you want to rapidly review the directory of a disk, any disk, and that is CATALOG. Also, if you want to erase a file, you can do so with the command, ERASE. The key punches are so easy: To CATALOG when you are in 'text typing', you hit Symbol-Shift, Caps-Shift and 'H'. That gives you the Home Menu. Put the disk in the designated drive and hit the 'C' key, and then ENTER, twice, and the drive kicks in and the directory appears on the screen. If you want to ERASE a file,you hit 'E' and you'll get a prompt, "ARE YOU SURE?" Hit 'Y' and you will be asked for a file name. ENTER the file name. The drive kicks in and the file is ERASEd and the Home Menu appears again.

For those of you who like MSCRIPT, this is a much improved version, even over version 5.3. However, Jack Dohany has stated that this is the last improvement of MSCRIPT,although he will help to dedicate it to a specific printer for a fee. It is EPSON compatible. My OKIDATA 82A need to be dedicated by the soft ware, so there is a problem, but for just straight printing, it works fine. I found it well worth the money to upgrade.

ATTENTION BASIC PROGRAMMERS

ZEBU

Zumks Extra Basic Utilities

GIVES YOU 38 NEW COMMANDS AND FUNCTIONS FOR THE 2068

UP/DOWN ARROW KEYS IN EDIT LINE: TRUNCATE EDIT LINE LEFT OR RIGHT OF CURSOR:FAST DELETE KEY FIXES TIMEX BUG:DELETE A WHOLE STATEMENT BETWEEN COLONS WITH ONE KEY STROKE:PRINT 5 TEXT SIZES WITH MULTIPLE CHARACTOR MODIFIERS: 16 BIT POKE:16 BIT PEEK:TRUE 16 BIT AND/OR/XOR OPERATIONS:BLOCK MOVE/SWAP/COPY BYTES,WITH BANK SWITCHING AVAILABLE:LIST A LINE OR A RANGE OF LINES:MERGE BASIC LINES:SEARCH BASIC LINES:SET START OF BASIC TO ANY LINE OR RESET TO ORIGINAL FIRST LINE:GET CRITICAL PROGRAM PARAMETERS:HEX TO DECIMAL TO HEX CONVERSION: DECIMAL TO BINARY BIT PATTERN: READ ANY NUMBER OF CHARACTORS FROM SCREEN TO A STRING VARIABLE :ELECTRIC INK AUTO ROTATES INK COLORS AT SELECTED AREAS:MORE

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IT CAN RESIDE IN ANY BANK
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COMPUTER HELP

HELP! Does anyone know how to interface a Tandon TM-1002A DS/DD 40-trk disk drive into a Larken ZX81 system?
CONTACT: Don Lambert
3310 Clover Drive SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

HARDWARE REVIEW

PANASONIC KX-P1124 PRINTER

When it comes to printing text, who in the heck needs lasers?? Scrap those archaic 9-pins, too, because typewriter-quality can be yours for a whole lot less than a kilobuck with a good, 24-pin printer!

While researching for something to replace the ol' 2040 standby, I had the opportunity to test, via a local vendor's 3-day return policy, a Panasonic KX-P1124 24-pin, dot-matrix printer. It was a lot of fun. I was impressed.

Weighing in at a hefty 18.7 pounds and sizing up at 16.9"(W) X 14.1"(D) X 5.6"(H), the 1124 comes loaded with features. One of the most noticable will hit you when you first start thinking about configuring the thing: There are no DIP switches! Every thing that would normally be accessible from a tiny area of a printer's circuit board is fully controlled from the front panel! This is a much more logical method, from the users' viewpoint, don't you think? No sense in scaring off the non-technical types.

This front panel has a seven-button set of membrane switches and LEDs to control everything. Aside from the standard printer functions, an 'EZ-Set' operator panel lets you select up to six different fonts (Draft, Courier, Prestige, Bold Prestige, Script and Sans-serif), LPIs, CPIs, form lengths, left and right margins, three power-on default settings (macros), self tests, quiet mode, perf-cut mode for 0" tear-off, paper-parking and micro- forward and reverse line feeds! Whew! As complicated as this sounds for having so many features at the front panel, it is really very logically arranged in a row/column combination setting. Press a switch for the function you wish to change. This is the 'row'. Green LEDs will guide your way. Press another switch to select which change you want. This is the 'column', with more guiding, green LEDs. Press 'SET' to enter it and go back online. It's that simple! Congrats to Panasonic for making a printer that's user friendly!

Additional features include a choice between friction and tractor feeds, with the latter giving an additional choice of push or pull. And speaking of paper handling, not only can you feed it from the top and back, but a long door can be opened from just under the front panel to allow paper to feed up thru here. This printer is really versatile!

Are there any negative aspects? Yes! The most noticeable is the noise. During printing, it creates quite a racket. The "official" specs lists a level of 56db. However, you have to wonder just what environmental factors were present for this measurement. Were all the walls, floors and ceilings heavily padded? There is a "Quiet Mode", where the print speed slows down a bit, but personal tests revealed that this hardly results in a significant reduction.

Another minus surfaces during graphics printing from a T/S 2068 computer (Aerco interface). A "standard" test in this area is to dump a SCREEN$ from Tech Draw Jr. I quickly pulled out a file copy of the Voyager 2 space craft, mainly due to its circular dish antenna. After pouring over the manual, repeatedly, and using the Epson option in the software I just could not get any better results than an oval for that dish antenna! For those of you who have purchased or plan to purchase this printer and also wish to experiment with the graphics capability, here is a list of settings I used to print a SCREEN$. I'm sure other combinations are possible:

Emulation mode:	**LQ-2500**
Default font :	Prestige
Int'l char. set:	USA
Image direction:	Uni-direction
Skip perforation:	OFF
Automatic LF :	OFF
Automatic CR :	OFF
P.O. detector :	ON
Download buffer:	Disable
Cut sheet feeder:	OFF
Buzzer Sound :	ON
Zero font :	0
Alt. Graphic Mode:	**ON**
Data length :	**8**

This particular list, by the way, points out yet another feature: Thru one of the self-tests you can print the entire list of printer parameters that had been

(cont'd next pg..)

2068 CADZ V 2.2

DESIGN PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARDS
SCHEMATICS : DRAFTING
ADVERTISEMENTS

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(...con't from prev pg)

set up the last time you used it. Nice feature! Please note the parameters in boldface. Use these for doing 2068 graphics. The Alternate Graphics Mode(AGM) must be used. Otherwise, the printer will attempt to display your 2068 SCREEN$ using either IBM or Epson graphic characters!

So how is this 1124 for text? No problem! Using the standard Aerco parallel-interface driver program (non-relocatable), all listed printer configurations work,except the ones for Gorilla Bannana,Seikosha GP100 & GP250X. For text quality, all LQ fonts look absolutely great. The Draft font is a bit weird, however. A close inspection of it reveals all characters to be comprised of tiny,sqiggly lines. But draft is draft, and the other fonts more than make up for it.

Advertised as Epson LQ-2500 or IBM Proprinter X24 compatible, the Panasonic KX-P1124 retails for around $330 at local outlets. Mail-order rates are much better.

If you don't mind the noise and the apparent graphics quirk, the KX-P1124 is an otherwise great buy.

MINUTES WITH SEATUG

by Malcolm Post, Secretary

Sorry folks.
No minutes this month.

SINCLAIR NEWS

By: R. CAZARES

On the local front...

I received two very interesting phone calls during the month of February. The first was from Mike DiRienzo, author of PIX-FX and the second from Tim Ward of the Vashon Island User Group. Mike and I had a long talk about Sinclair hardware, software, and shared some of his experiences in the Sinclair world with me. Mike is a Sinclair programmer and offered to help me get that darn video digitizer board working. We had a small impromp-to get-together at my house and Mike brought his Larken System and homemade video board. We had the same problems as during last months demo. Nothing we tried could get the board capturing images. We decided the best thing to do is ship it back to SMUG and see what they come up with, since they were the ones' that made it. So off it goes!! Mikes video board works like a dream. Great image capture from any video source and to top it off a high resolution mode! Derryck was also in attendance that evening. He brought a color video camera which we never got around to using. Thanks Derryck and Mike for your efforts to get the video board working.

Tim Ward said he would like a copy of our library list. Tim and Tony Willing of VISTA are handling the public domain library for SNUG. At least the T/S 1000 and T/S 2068 lists have been compliled by them. Tim said they are on hold for the present time until SNUG decides what they want to do. Keep up the good work guys!!!!

SEATUG'S COMING ATTRACTIONS

Hey, all you Timex/Sinclair disk-system (any of 'em) owners! Have you ever wished for a simple, menu-driven operating system? Well, even if you still use cassette tape, you really ought to check out the March demo at the next SEATUG meeting!

President Derryck Turner will be on hand to show all attendees that very same thing! He'll be showing off with his Oliger disk system running the aforementioned menu program and he says it's great!

However, just as importantly, can President Turner dare hope to destroy the infamous SEATUG Gremlin?

Come to the meeting and find out!!

SWYM ADS

FOR SALE:

Leading Edge (Gorilla Banana) printer. Works perfectly. Standard parallel Centronics interface. 50 cps - 80 col. 5 X 7 dot matrix. Graphics capability. Tractor forms feed. Uses print cartridges that can be had from stationery store for $3.15. Operating guide. Print quality not NLQ. $50.00
Call Chuck, 523-5272 or write 9013 32nd Ave NE Seattle, WA 98115. Not mine, but selling for friend at work. Scoop up this deal!

FOR SALE:

TS1000 w/16K RAM, 4 program tapes, inc. Supermath & Vu-Calc and 11 books. Call 633-0419 or write Howard Stein, P.O. Box 31663, Seattle, WA 98103

FOR SALE:

Many TS1000 "blister packages" for sale! Package contains computer, 16K RAM pack and 3 program tapes. Each package: $15 !
Write: Gary D. Young
586 9th Avenue
Marion, IA 52302

SWYM

SWYM is the official newsletter of the Seattle Area Timex Users Group. It is published monthly, with mailings due before the 1st Thursday of the month.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for non-Seattle area users are only $10/yr, to SWYM, c/o Dave Battershill, Treasurer, P.O. Box 64462 Tacoma, WA 98464.
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